

**Mary Jo McLaughlin, Teacher, Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary School, Taftville  
Linda Raffles, Teacher, East Catholic High School, Manchester  
Raised Bill 5421 – An Act Concerning Educators and Administrators  
Education Committee  
March 8, 2010**

Members of the Education Committee, Chairman Gaffey and Chairman Fleischmann. My name is Mary Jo McLaughlin and I am a teacher at Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary School in Taftville and I am Linda Raffles and I teach at East Catholic High School in Manchester.

As teachers we are here tonight to address Raised Bill 5421, An Act Concerning Educators and Administrators. In particular we would like to ask the committee member to support the language in the bill that repeals language that eliminated experienced teaching in nonpublic schools as a means of obtaining Professional Educator Certification.

Catholic school teachers partake in many of the same training classes as our public school teacher colleagues. Both of our dioceses require we receive 90 CEU hours over a five-year period, we participate in professional development days and receive an evaluation every year.

We would like to point out; this provision was included in a bill that was supposed to make it easier for professionals to become certified. It seems

wrong to us to exclude a group of teachers who educate 69,000 students in Connecticut because of where we teach.

We also strongly support the provision that would allow college students to student teach at private or religious schools. I had been a public school teacher for 36 years in Glastonbury and for many years I have acted as a mentor too many student teachers who are currently teaching at Connecticut's public, private and religious schools. I would enjoy being able to share my many years of experience with a new group of teachers.

I do believe this program should be voluntary for the student and University and that mentors and administrators should have the same qualifications as our public school colleagues when working in this particular role.

The student teaching experience is one of the most important components of the teacher certification process. Allowing college students to student teach in a private or religious school setting would provide them with the skills to serve others and further the values and practices of their profession.